

Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1117

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0419

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SU, US

SUBJECT: USG/GOS RELATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY. KEY NIMEIRI OFFICIAL IS CONCERNED LEST
FEELING GROW HERE THAT USG NO LONGER INTERESTED IN SUDAN.
I HAVE ASSURED HIM THIS NOT THE CASE AND THAT I FIRMLY BELIEVE
BETTER DAYS ARE AHEAD, EVEN THOUGH INITIAL STEPS COULD FALL SHORT
OF SUDANESE EXPECTATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. MINSTATE SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL AFFS IDRIS ASKED ME FEB 11
WHAT WAS THE OUTLOOK FOR USG/GOS RELATIONS. IDRIS SAID HE IS
WORRIED BY RECENT INDICATIONS RENEWED SOVIET WILLINGNESS ASSIST
SUDAN AND CLAIMED THAT SOME SUDANESE FEEL USG NO LONGER
INTERESTED IN THIS COUNTRY. HE HOPED THIS WAS NO THE CASE AND
THAT OUR BILATERAL ACTIVITIES WOULD INCREASE. POINTING TO UNION
CARBIDE BATTERY PLANT INAUGURATION, JOHNS-MANVILLE ASBESTOS PLANT
DEAL AND IMPORVED OUTLOOK FOR KH CEMENT SCHEME, IDRIS SAID EVEN MORE
AMERICAN PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND EXPERTISE IS DESIRED BY
NIMEIRI. HE HOPED SUCH CLOSER COOPERATION WOULD BE
ENCOURAGED IN ALL FIELDS.

2. I ASSURED IDRIS THAT USG CLEARLY REMAINS INTERESTED
IN COUNTRY JSTH THE SIZE AND POTENTIAL OF SUDAN. USG HAS
BEEN SEEKING FOSTER SUDANESE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL RELA-
TIONS AND JOINT VENTURES AS MATTER SETTLED POLICY, (E.G., OPIC, EXIM)

.
WASHINGTON WAS PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL FOR PRESIDENT NIMEIRI'S
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PERSONAL ASSISTANCE IN RECENT RELEASE KAGNEW 2. REMINDING

IDRIS THAT I WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I THEN SAID I FELT CONFIDENT THAT OUR APPRECIATION FOR GOS HELP WAS IN PROCESS BEING TRANSLATED INTO TANGIBLE PROGRESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP. WHILE THIS, OF COURSE, WAS NOT CONDITIONED ON FUTURE SUDANESE HELP IN FREEING REMAINING HOSTAGES, SUCH ACTION WOULD OBVIOUSLY ACCELERATE WELCOME TREND. IDRIS SAID HE WOULD SHORTLY SEE NIMEIRI AND TELL HIM HE COULD EXPECT USG/GOS RELATIONS TO IMPROVE AND BECOME INCREASINGLY PRODUCTIVE. I CAUTIONED HIM THAT WHILE SUCH EVOLUTION MIGHT BE IN CARDS OVER TIME, INITIAL STEPS COULD FALL SHORT OF SUDANESE EXPECTATIONS. FUNDAMENTAL POINT TO BE BORNE IN MIND SHOULD THEREFORE NOT BE MAGNITUDE OR DRAMATIC NATURE OF SOME EARLY CHANGE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP BUT RATHER THAT THE GRAPH WILL HAVE TURNED DECISIVELY UPWARD. IDRIS SAID HE UNDERSTOOD, WOULD SO INFORM THE PGBSIDENT AND WAS SURE LATTER WOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

3. COMMENT. IN KEY POSITION TO KNOW NIMEIRI'S THINKING, IDRIS NO DOUBT REFLECTS GROWING IMPATIENCE IN TOP SUDANESE CIRCLES AT MAINTENANCE IRRITATING "HOLDS" ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AS WELL AS LACK CONCRETE MANIFESTATION SO FAR OF USG APPRECIATION FOR WHAT GOS HAS ALREADY DONE TO FREE OUR CITIZENS. IN FACE HIS DIRECT QUERY, BELIEVE CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTED POSITIVE COMMENTS ON PERSONAL BASIS BUT I STRESSED THAT FINAL DECISIONS ARE MADE IN WASHINGTON AND SUDANESE SHOULD NOT START COUNTING CHICKENS PREMATURELY.
BREWER

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